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SUBJECT: WHO IS FEEDING THE TIGER OPPOSITION GROUP?

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¶1. (U) On March 18, State Duma Deputies Sergey Belokonev (Yedinaya Rossia) and Sergey Ivanov (LDPR) called upon colleagues to pay closer attention to the activities of "TIGR," the Community of Initiative Groups of Russia. This loosely organized opposition group continues to organize rallies in the Far East with the cooperation of the communists. Belokonov referred to unnamed mass media sources that in October of 2008, some 16 grants were given to Primorye for organizing public actions. Belokonev stated that some foreign NGOs provided financing for these grants. He claimed that the recent joint protest of Communists and TIGR representatives was paid by foreign NGOs. Belokonev called TIGR a "destructive public organization."

¶2. (U) Sergey Ivanov believes that "American" money was paid to finance TIGR protests. The Yedinaya Rossia Deputy requested the Duma's Security Issues Committee to ask law enforcement agencies about the financial sources for these "destructive organizations and movements.", because it interferes with Russian internal issues. Deputies requested a similar check on the activities of the Primorye KPRF branch, because Communists participated in TIGR's protests in Primorye and other RFE regions.

¶3. (U) The TIGR response in a March 19 open letter to the State Duma denies the charge of foreign involvement, then takes on a satirical tone. Begin Letter:

We, organizers and active participants of protest actions in January, February and March in Vladivostok, Novosibirsk, Irkutsk, Omsk, Moscow, St. Petersburg are puzzled by the recent State Duma statement. All printed materials and organizational work was done voluntarily using personal savings or minor collections of TIGR members. All our actions were open for those who disagree with actions of the federal government. No one expected to earn money through participation in the meetings. These meetings were our spontaneous and natural reaction to the unpopular decisions of the Russian government. As we remember, nobody cancelled our right to get together, to express our opinions. It is a good sign for the society, if there some people ready to create civil society in Russia, especially because our President talks about establishing responsible civil society.

That's why we support the initiative of Sergey Belokonev and Sergey Ivanov and call members of the Security Committee, the State Duma to make maximum efforts to protect interests of their voters and to find the truth in this complicated issue. Also, we call upon all Russian special services to join this investigation and determine the betrayers, who joined TIGR by some unknown method.

These lucrative people cast a shadow of suspicion on the movement and hide incomes, received from the western special services. That's why they cheat the comrades-in-arms.

In order to provide the full assistance to the state service men

in the truth finding and punishment of violators, we are ready to provide information about those people, who are aware about financial transactions inside our public movement. First of all, you need to contact specialists of the Analytic Department in the State Duma and its Head, Aleksandr Belousov, particularly. Last January he pointed out that some members of public organizations in the Russian Far East have contacts with foreign intelligence. TIGR members could be among these activists.

Unfortunately, we do not know names of specialists in the Analytic Department, however, we apology in advance, that we did not use this information about potential agents of the countries-potential enemies-among us on time.

We recommend contacting Vladimir Pekhtin, Primorye State Duma deputy, who has information and evidence about contacts of representatives of the RFE protest movements with Rotary-Club and similar organizations. We inform you that Igor Pushkarev, Vladivostok Mayor, made statements that he is aware of connections between the Soros Foundation and the financing of protests in November and December of 2008. Later he stated that he has nothing to prove his words. These persons became initiators of mass media statements about evidence for financial ties between TIGR and foreign intelligence. We request you inform us, via mass media sources about your investigation, if it is possible. In future, please, keep our organization under your strict 24-hours control, in order to prevent the entering of enemy agents in our ranks.

We, participants and organizers of TIGR public movement, state that none of us received money from the hands of representatives of foreign intelligence groups and criminal structures. We never attracted citizens to attend our protests, pickets and meetings for payment. We expressed our civil will and position freely and openly, implementing our rights given us by the Russian Constitution. End open letter.

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14. There are numerous signatures attached to the official TIGR site <https://the-righ.org/>. The website opens with the call, "Don't be silent, join!"

15. Comment: TIGR has had a flair from the beginning, from choosing an acronym that at once represents the Russia and the Far East while at the same time showing itself to be a competitor to the Bear symbol of United Russia, to issuing public statements that show that the organization does not take itself too seriously. The organization is loosely knit and is active on the internet, but it also takes to the streets and makes concrete demands. Russian authorities are clearly concerned, but are resorting to tired old tactics of blaming "foreign forces" for what is clearly a budding opposition.

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